said retrieval means of said server retrieves, from said first character image data storage means, character image data expressing a character, which has been specified by the character specifying data and has a size that has been designated by the size designating data, as an image in such a manner that the specified character will have a font specified by the font specifying data.

6. (Amended)   The system according to claim 22, wherein said transmitting means of said client computer transmits, to the server, character string specifying data for specifying a combination of a plurality of characters constructing a character string, and font specifying data for specifying fonts of the characters constructing the character string;

said receiving means of said server receives the character string data and the font specifying data transmitted from said transmitting means; and

said retrieval means of said server retrieves, from said first character image data storage means, character image data expressing characters as images, wherein each of these characters, which construct the character string specified by the character string data, has a font that has been specified by the font specifying data.

7. (Amended)   The system according to claim 22, wherein said client computer further includes style data transmitting means for transmitting, to the server, character style designating data for designating style of a character specified by the character specifying data; and

said server includes:

designated character-style retrieval means for retrieving, from said first character image data storage means, designated-style character image data expressing, as an image, a character of a style designated by the character style designating data transmitted from said style data transmitting means;

designated-style character image data generating means for generating the designated-style character image data in response to a situation where the designated-style character image data is not found by said designated character-style retrieval means; and

designated-style character image data transmitting means for transmitting, to said client computer, the designated-style character image data generated by said designated-style character image data generating means or the designated-style character image data found by said designated character-style retrieval means.

9. (Amended) The system according to claim 22, wherein said client computer further includes character image data storage means for storing the character image data transmitted from said character image data transmitting means.

10. (Amended) The system according to claim 22, wherein said server includes:

a printing device; and

means for generating new character image data, from the character image data that has been designated by said character image data generating means, so as to obtain a character image having a resolution suited to the resolution of said printing device.

14. (Amended) The method according to claim 25, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting, from the client computer to the server, size designating data representing the size of a character specified by character specifying data; and

retrieving, at the server, character image data expressing a character, which has been specified by the character specifying data and has a size that has been designated by the size designating data, as an image in such a manner that the specified character will have a font specified by font specifying data.

16. (Amended) The method according to claim 25, further comprising a step of transmitting, from the client computer to the server, character string specifying data for specifying a combination of a plurality of characters constructing a character string, and font specifying data for specifying fonts of the characters constructing the character string;
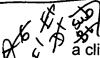
receiving, at the server, the character string data and the font specifying data transmitted from the client computer; and

retrieving, at the server, character image data expressing characters as images, wherein each of these characters, which construct the character string specified by the character string data, has a font that has been specified by the font specifying data.

Please add the following new claims:

--21. (New) A font sharing system in which data can be communicated between a client computer and a server, said client computer comprising:

means for selecting a font;

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font preview data storage determination means for determining whether font preview data, which is for displaying a representative character having a font selected by said font selecting means, has been stored;

display control means for controlling a display device so as to display, on a display screen, the representative character represented by the font preview data in response to a determination by said font preview data storage determination means that the font preview data has been stored; and

means for transmitting to the server a request to transmit the font preview data in response to a determination by said font preview data storage determination means that the font preview data has not been stored; and

said server including font preview data transmitting means for transmitting the font preview data to said client computer in response to the font preview data transmission request transmitted from said client computer.

22. (New) The system according to claim 21, wherein said client computer further includes:

input means for inputting a command determining the font represented by the font preview data; and

means for transmitting character specifying data, which specifies a character, and font specifying data which specifies a font determined by the input means, to said server;

said server includes:

first character image data storage means for storing character image data expressing a character as an image;

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receiving means for receiving the character specifying data and the font specifying data transmitted from said client computer;

retrieval means for retrieving, from said first character image data storage means, character image data expressing a character, which has been specified by the character specifying data received by said receiving means, as an image in such a manner that the specified character will have a font specified by the font specifying data received by said receiving means;

character image data generating means for generating the character image data in response to a situation where the character image data cannot be found in said first character image data storage means by retrieval performed by said retrieval means; and

character image data transmitting means for transmitting, to said client computer, character image data generated by said character image data generating means or character image data found by retrieval by said retrieval means.

23. (New) A client computer capable of communicating data with a server, comprising:

means for selecting a font;

font preview data storage determination means for determining whether font preview data, which is for displaying a representative character having a font selected by said font selecting means, has been stored;

display control means for controlling a display device so as to display, on a display screen, the representative character represented by the font preview data in

response to a determination by said font preview data storage determination means that the font preview data has been stored; and

means for transmitting to the server a request to transmit the font preview data in response to a determination by said font preview data storage determination means that the font preview data has not been stored.

24. (New) A server capable of communicating data with a client computer, comprising:

storage means for storing font preview data;

receiving means for receiving a request to transmit the font preview data transmitted from said client computer;

retrieval means for retrieving the font preview data in response to the request received by said receiving means from said storage means; and

transmitting means for transmitting the font preview data found by the retrieval means to said client computer.

25. (New) A method of sharing fonts in a system in which data can be communicated between a client computer and a server, comprising:

selecting a font at said client computer;

determining whether font preview data, which is for displaying a representative character having a font selected by said font selecting means, has been stored at said client computer;

controlling a display device so as to display, on a display screen, the representative character represented by the font preview data in response to a determination by said determining step that the font preview data has been stored;

transmitting to said server a request to transmit the font preview data in response to a determination by said determining step that the font preview data has not been stored at said client computer; and

transmitting the font preview data from said server to said client computer in response to the request for font preview data transmitted from said client computer.

26. (New) A method of controlling a client computer to communicate data with a server, comprising:

selecting a font at said client computer;

determining whether font preview data, which is for displaying a representative character having a font selected by said step of selecting a font, has been stored at said client computer;

controlling a display device so as to display, on a display screen, the representative character represented by the font preview data in response to a determination by said determining step that the font preview data has been stored at said client computer; and

transmitting to the server a request to transmit the font preview data in response to a determination by said determining step that the font preview data has not been stored.

27. (New) A method of controlling a server to communicate data with a client computer, comprising:

storing font preview data at said server;

receiving a request to transmit the font preview data transmitted from said client computer;

retrieving the font preview data in response to the request transmitted from said client computer; and

transmitting the font preview data found by said retrieving step to said client computer.

28. (New) A recording medium storing a program for controlling a client computer capable of communicating data with a server, said program:

enabling a user of said client computer to select a font;

causing said client computer to determine whether font preview data, which is for displaying a representative character having a font selected by said user, has been stored at said client computer;

controlling a display device so as to display, on a display screen, the representative character represented by the font preview data in response to a determination that the font preview data has been stored at said client computer; and

causing said client computer to transmit to the server a request to transmit the font preview data in response to a determination that the font preview data has not been stored at said client computer.

29. (New) A server-readable recording medium storing a program for controlling a server capable of communicating data with a client computer, said program:

causing said server to store font preview data;

causing said server to receive a request to transmit the font preview data transmitted from said client computer;

causing said server to retrieve the font preview data in response to the received request; and

causing said server to transmit the retrieved font preview data to said client computer.--